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STATINTL

Penkovsky Spy Trial Singes Reds

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The Soviet high command itself now has been drawn into the mystery of the Penkovsky spy trial.

The chief of the Soviet tactical rocket forces, Chief Marshal of Artillery Sergei S. Varentsov, has been demoted, and the chief prosecutor in the spy trial has publicly denied that Marshal Varentsov's predecessor, the late Marshal of Artillery Mitrofan I. Nedelin had been Penkovsky's father-in-law. Marshal Nedelin in May, 1960, was given credit for the downing of the American U-2 spy plane.

Political Backing

Penkovsky's father-in-law, said the chief prosecutor in an *Izvestia* interview, was a by now apparently dismissed "General G." of the Army's political administration.

The Soviet capital has heard rumors about the background of the Penkovsky trial and its probable reverberations — otherwise the chief prosecutor, a lieutenant general in the armed forces, would not have made such a statement. For personal relations of public figures are almost never mentioned in the U.S.S.R.

How had the Penkovsky affair become possible and why was it aired in this manner? One thinks of Polish Communist Party chief Wladyslaw Gomulka's remark of November, 1962, about the question how Stalinism had become possible. "The Soviet comrades have not said everything," Mr. Gomulka told his central committee.

"In due time it may suit the Soviets to say more about the Penkovsky affair. Marshal Varentsov has lost his honor for having trusted the by now executed spy.

"Whatever the demoted marshal's responsibility, the fact that he and several of his aides were among the first to be spluttered by the affair calls attention to the peculiar relations between the political leadership and the high command. Marshal Varentsov was no ordinary military technician."

As an alternate member of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, he must have had no difficulty in getting as much information

rocket forces, he headed a branch of the armed forces which has been a bone of contention between Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev and part of the high command for the past three years.

The differences between the Premier and the high command came into the open after Mr. Khrushchev in January, 1960, had made the Supreme Soviet vote a reduction of the armed forces by 1,200,000 men and the demobilization of 25,000 officers.

Opposition Reported

Politically, this measure was keyed to the Paris summit conference in May; economically, it was to make available more labor; militarily, it was to be offset by further development of the rocket arm.

A group of marshals, headed by First Deputy Defense Minister Ivan S. Konev, are said to have opposed the measure. In order to keep his critics in check, Mr. Khrushchev, a few weeks later, launched the so-called democratization of the Army. Sometime in the spring of 1960, Marshal Konev lost his position as First Deputy Defense Minister, and after a brief comeback in East Germany, was given the innocuous job of an inspector of the armed forces, which carries no real responsibility.

A new difference between the Premier and the high command came up in April, 1962, when Mr. Khrushchev in vain sought the approval of the Central Committee for a cut in the defense budget.

Marshal of the Armored Forces Pavel A. Rostmistrov at the time came out in defense of the Premier, declaring that a substantial increase of the rocket forces would cost less than the maintenance under arms of 1,000,000 soldiers.